

In addition, the '060 reference does not teach the exclusion of thermoplastics having epoxy-binding functions or ester functions, as described in the present claim 1. To the contrary, the reference explicitly teaches the use of polyvinyl acetate and polyester thermoplastics, and thus strongly teaches away from the present invention.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants request withdrawal of these rejections.

Claims 1, 2, 7-10, 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over any of J.P. Derwent Absts. XP002118058 ('058 reference), XP002118059 ('059 reference) or XP002118060 ('060 reference). Applicants respectfully traverse.

All of the cited references strongly teach away from the exclusion of thermoplastics having epoxy-binding functions or ester functions, as described in the present claim 1, and so cannot support a § 103 rejection. As noted above, the '060 reference explicitly teaches the use of polyvinyl acetate and polyester thermoplastics. The '058 reference requires an "acid modified polystyrene thermoplastic elastomer," preferably obtained by modifying the thermoplastic with maleic anhydride or (meth)acrylic acid. The '059 reference explicitly teaches the use of ester-containing polymers such as (meth)acrylates.

In addition, neither the '058 reference nor the '059 reference provide the teachings missing from the '060 reference, noted above. The Examiner explicitly notes that the '058 reference does not teach a cured epoxy. (Office Action page 3, lines 6-7). The '059 reference in fact teaches a *liquid* epoxy, and, like the '060 reference, suggests a curing agent. The '059 reference specifically describes a "heat-sensitive" adhesive. Like the '060 reference, neither of the '058 and '059 references teach a pressure-sensitive adhesive that includes a *cured* epoxy, as described in the present claim 1.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants request withdrawal of these rejections.

Claims 3-6, 11-13 and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over any of '058, '059 or '060 taken in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,789,699 (Kiefer). Applicants respectfully traverse.

As noted above, the '058, '059 and '060 references strongly and explicitly teach away from the present invention.

Kiefer is cited for the disclosure of a non-woven pressure-sensitive adhesive. As the Examiner notes, Kiefer does not teach the inclusion of a cured epoxy component, or any epoxy component. The present application explicitly demonstrates the distinct and improved properties of blown microfiber webs according to the present invention, in comparison to a web lacking the cured epoxy component; including improved surface area coverage, peel, shear and porosity characteristics. (See Example 4, Application at pp. 23-24.)


Finally, Applicants note that there is no motivation in any of Kiefer or the '058, '059 or '060 references to combine their teachings in the manner of this rejection.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants request withdrawal of the present rejections and allowance of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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